

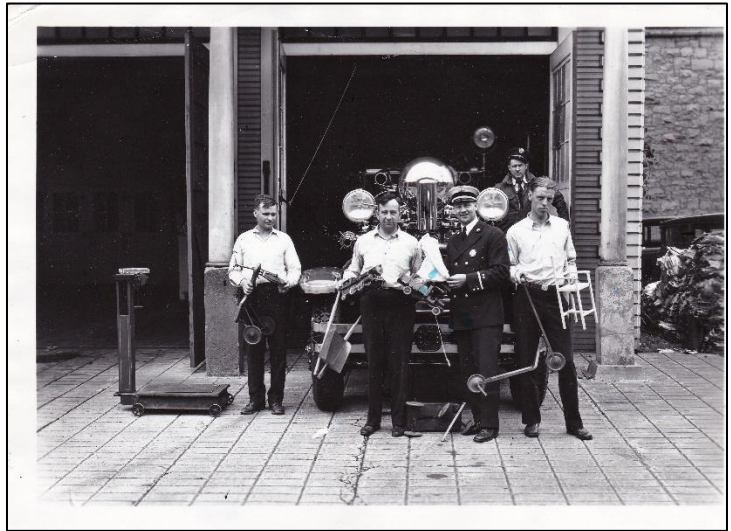
The Eddie Boatright Story

Compiled by Don Porth

Edward Luther Boatright was born in San Francisco on November 29, 1892. His family would move to Portland in 1898, where he would spend the rest of his life.

Eddie, as he was best known, became a member of Portland Fire on October 5, 1914. He would serve a diverse and storied career, retiring on November 29, 1957.

It was during his first day at the Fire Department that Eddie would answer the Sellwood Fire Station door. Standing in front of it was the tear-stained face of a young boy. He asked if someone could help him fix a small wagon that he wanted to give his little brother for Christmas. Eddie did just that, and in doing so, created a very Merry Christmas for the young boy. A week later, other kids from the neighborhood were bringing toys to the station for repair. The other firefighter in the Station began to pitch in.



Over the years, other firefighters rallied behind the idea and in 1926, decided to give the effort an official name, "Toy and Joy Makers,"



Eddie would go on to become the Training Officer for Portland Fire. He developed the first Fire College, which opened on the 3rd floor of the central fire station in 1930. By 1932, he co-published a first-of-its-kind training manual that became affectionately known as the "Boatright Bible." It was a daunting book that covered all aspects of firefighting, fire science, chemistry, and math.

By 1942, Eddie had the Fire College operating efficiently. His next task would be to head up the city's Civil Defense Program. As the United States was exiting World War II, the fear of invasion was real and Eddie served in this capacity from October

1942 until December 1944.

Upon his return to regular duty, Eddie became the spokesperson for Portland Fire. He was at civic events, community meetings, and engaged with all of the media of the day. If there was a story on Portland Fire, Eddie was most often quoted.





Eddie would reach the rank of Assistant Chief on January 19, 1949 and continue until his November 29, 1957 retirement. His 43 years of service rank him high among the longest careers of Portland Fire. But he wasn't done. In 1963, he was hired as

Fire Chief by the Albany Fire Department, tasked with reorganizing the department. He would retire after completing the task five months later.

During his time both on and off the job, Eddie also served as Commander of Portland Post 1 of the American Legion. He deployed to World War I for two years (1917-1919). And of course, he continued to volunteer for Toy and Joy Makers as long as he could in retirement.

Eddie would pass away on August 18, 1980 at the age of 87.



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